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MANAGEMENT

—OF THE—

Western Lunatic Asylum,

Staunton, Va.



FEB 4 1958

Management Of The Western Lunatic Asylum.

PAT A MEETING of the Directors of this Asylum on April 15, 1891, it was *Resolved*, That a committee of three directors, with the addition of the President of the Board, be appointed a Publication Committee, to prepare for publication such information in regard to the asylum as they may deem to be of public interest, including a statement of its capacity, the number of its inmates, officers, and employees, the cost of its support, the extent of its buildings, and such other facts financial, professional, or statistical as they may see proper to embrace in their report.

In accordance with this resolution, the following paper was presented to and approved by the Board of Directors at a session held July 15, 1891.

Fifty years ago the best system of general management for an asylum for the insane was an open question. Many theories were held on the subject, and various experiments made, which were abandoned as impracticable as soon as their results became manifest from experience. Among these theories there was one which had, and strange to say, still has its advocates, although it runs plainly counter to all experience in other departments of human effort. Its main idea was that the management of each asylum should be divided between two chief officers, one to have control of its medical, and the other of its financial and business matters. It was thought that each would be a check upon the other, and that official malfeasance would thus be prevented. But in reality, as the result showed, it simply produced an antagonism between officers whose harmonious co-operation was absolutely essential to the welfare of the asylum.

On this point we have the recorded testimony of the highest possible authority on the subject, the Association of Superintendents of American Asylums for the Insane. At their meeting in May, 1875, they adopted the following resolutions.

"That the government of our hospitals, as at present constituted, whereby a physician supposed to be eminently qualified by his professional training and his traits of character, both moral and intellectual, is invested with the immediate control of the whole establishment, while a board of directors, trustees, or managers, as they are differently called in different places, men of acknowledged integrity and intelligence, has the general supervision of its affairs, has been found by ample experience to furnish the best security against abuses, and the strongest incentives to constant effort and improvement."

"That any supernumerary functionaries, endowed with the privilege of scrutinizing the management of the hospital, even sitting in judgment upon the conduct of attendants and the complaints of patients, and controlling the management, directly by the exercise of superior powers, or indirectly by stringent advice, can scarcely accomplish an amount of good sufficient to compensate for the harm that is sure to follow."

The system of management, thus so clearly outlined by officers who have put its actual results to the test of experience, is the one now in use in the asylums both of this country and of England. Under it a Board of Directors control the financial operations of each asylum, supervise its ad-

ministration, represent the friends of the patients, and protect the public interests by frequent personal inspection of its condition.

They appoint as their agent a medical superintendent, whom they invest with full control of the institution in all its departments, but limiting his powers and authority to carrying out their own views as to its proper management, and holding him responsible to them for the proper and judicious exercise of the power thus delegated to him. The result is, with rarely an exception, that a laudable ambition to meet well the great responsibility thus devolved upon him leads him to feel a deep personal interest in the efficient working of each department of the asylum and to labor constantly to promote that harmonious co-operation of all the departments, without which it is impossible to secure the fullest efficacy of any one of them. And it is a demonstrated fact that better results are obtained by entrusting them all to one agent of the Board than by dividing them between two persons, each of whom would probably think that the interests of his department were being sacrificed by the efforts of the other to promote those of his own.

This last statement is borne out by the history of this asylum. After a trial of the dual system for eleven years Dr. F. T. Stribling, then Superintendent, urged that it should be abolished, in order to place this asylum on a level with the northern institutions. Of the results of his suggestion, and of their reasons for carrying it out, the directors speak as follows in their report for 1840. "For the purpose both of best securing the benevolent objects of the Commonwealth, and of obtaining a proper economy in the management of the asylum, the board has reorganized the institution, conferring on the physician the office and powers of general superintendent, and defining with particularity and exactness the duties of all ministerial officers and assistants. The working of the new system has realized their highest expectations, and they think they may safely promise a considerable reduction in the future expenditures for the support of the asylum."

FINANCIAL SYSTEM.

The income of the asylum is derived from three sources, 1st, monthly drafts by the President of the Board of Directors on the annuity appropriated for its support by the Legislature; 2nd the board of pay-patients; 3rd the sale of sundries by the Steward. All its monies, in whatever amount or from whatever source they are received, are required to be deposited in the banks of Staunton, to the credit of the asylum, said banks being required to give bond for their safe keeping in a sum double the amount on deposit at any give time.

When thus deposited, they cannot be drawn out for any purpose whatever except upon checks signed by three members of the Board of Directors. At the beginning of each month an Executive Committee, consisting of a majority of the Board, receive from the Steward an estimate of the amount that will be needed for the expenditures of the month, for which amount he receives a check signed as stated above. He is debited by the clerk with the amount of this check, and with nothing else what ever. No other portion of the asylum's funds are subject to his use or control. Whenever he makes a sale of asylum property, he is required to report it to the Clerk, who enters upon the day book the name of the purchaser, the article and amount sold, and the price paid, and who then deposits the proceeds in bank to the credit of the asylum.

He is required to take, number, and file a voucher for every expenditure made by him, the account of each expenditure being fully itemized. At the end of the month he exhibits these vouchers to an auditing Committee of the Board of Directors, who examine them in detail, and verify the balance exhibited in his statement of account.

The above system has been used here for many years past. It is recommended not only by its simplicity, but by its keeping the funds of the asylum under the immediate control of the Directors, and its enabling them to maintain a constant personal supervision of the manner in which they are disbursed.

The Board of Directors is also required by law to render to the Auditor of Public Accounts a quarterly statement in detail of all the receipts and expenditures of the asylum.

The records of the asylum show clearly how judicious and economical an expenditure of the public funds is secured by this system. The cost per capita of the maintenance of the inmates during the fiscal year ending October 1st last was \$151.77. With four exceptions only, this was the lowest per capita cost reported by any of the forty prominent American asylums with which a comparison was made, and in these four it was but a trifle lower. To appreciate the full significance of this statement, it must be remembered that it means that the inmates have been furnished with a most comfortable home, constantly kept in the best repair, with a fare abundant in quantity and excellent in quality and manner of preparation, with clothing, fuel, lights, washing, medical attention, and servants' attendance, with the means of amusement and entertainment, and in short with all that was necessary for their physical and mental well being, all for the sum of 42 cents a day. And this has been about the average cost for years past. It is surely unnecessary to say anything more concerning the financial management of the asylum than to state this one fact.

Admission Of Pay-Patients And Of State Patients.

There is a false impression, believed to be quite prevalent, that in deciding upon applications for admission into the asylum preference is given to those who can pay for their maintenance. Nothing more should be needed to remove it than to state the principle that really does govern admissions, together with another fact which is proved by the records of the institution.

The proper classification of its inmates is a most important, and indeed an absolutely essential factor in the good management of an insane asylum. It is a dictate both of humanity and of common sense that the delicate nervous shrinking patient should not be forced into daily and hourly contact with the noisy dangerous maniac. It would be both unwise and cruel because for one who is conscious, as most of those admitted are, that he is coming to an insane asylum, it would completely neutralize all efforts to soothe and comfort him to surround him at once with its most unfortunate and repulsive features, and cruel, because nothing could tend more to depress and discourage him, and thus to fasten his insanity upon him for life. Therefore the first point inquired into, in examining an application, is the character of the insanity of the applicant. The question to be determined is, not whether there is a vacancy *anywhere* in the walls of the

asylum, but whether there is one *in any ward in which it would be either wise or humane* to place the new comer. Can he be put where he will be benefitted and probably cured, or will he have to be put where in all probability his sufferings will be aggravated, and his disease made permanent and incurable?

For those who have any knowledge of the proper management of the insane, it is needless to say that this should be, as it is, the main principle upon which applications for admission are decided. Upon any other, the few vacancies that occur in our over-crowded asylum would be soon filled with those who, instead of being benefitted and restored, would be inevitably consigned by its bad management to the fate of chronic insanity. It would take but a few years to obliterate wholly its curative feature, and to write despair instead of hope over its portals.

But for those who think that the question of admission is a question of financial standing, it ought to be enough to give the following facts from the records of the institution. Out of 600 patients in round numbers, there are now only 35 who pay their board, and some of their accounts run back twenty five or thirty years. Of the 126 who were admitted during the year ending October 1, 1890, only 15 paid for their maintenance. Here again it would seem unnecessary to do more than state this conclusive fact. It proves clearly that while the the asylum has recognized the right of the rich to a share in the benefits of a state institution which they are taxed to support, it has by no means given them an undue share. It should be remembered also that a good many persons, who are unwilling for their friends to be supported by the state, make it a condition of their reception that they shall pay their board.

ADDITIONS TO BUILDINGS SINCE 1877.

During the superintendency of Dr. Ro. F. Baldwin, and under the direction of Messrs. A. M. Fauntleroy, J. H. McCue, T. W. Shelton, and J. A. Waddell, the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors, the foundations of the first addition on the female side were commenced by a force under the direction of S. A. Hoshour, Steward of the asylum, in February 1877. During the same year the building was erected by contractors whose proposals had been accepted by the Committee, on designs made by the superintending architect, J. Crawford Neilson, who has planned and directed all the buildings added to the asylum since 1877.

The general contractors were H. J. Lushbaugh & Bro.; including in their work all that of the building except steam heating, which was done by the lowest bidder, T. C. Basshor & Co., and the wire work, which was done by M. Walker & Sons, of Philadelphia.

This building, estimated by the architect in 1877 to cost \$25,000 cost upon its completion in March 1878, \$25,974.00. An examination of the cost of running the steam heating, which had proved entirely satisfactory, showed that in the most severe weather the expenditure of coal had rarely been one ton a day, and that the average consumption was much lower. This was for 78 patients, with a constant ventilation for each of them of 3000 cubic feet of fresh air per hour.

In March 1879, the Board through a committee consisting of Drs. Fauntleroy and Shelton, and Messes. Waddell, Crawford, Harman, Catlett

and Bumgardner, awarded to Thos. Woodroffe a contract for building an addition to female ward C, including all work except gas fitting, wire work, and steam heating, upon the designs and under the superintendence of the same architect; and in the same year he prepared plans for an addition to the North Western Male Building, for which a contract was made with H. J. Lushbaugh & Bro., including the general work of the building to contain 103 patients. When this contract was completed, and a further expenditure of \$6,708.40 made for its steam-heating, wire work and inside wire guards, the building finally cost \$30,825.35, the addition to ward C having cost \$11,651.31.

The result of these three building operations, beginning with February 1877 and ending in July 1881, was to produce excellent, strongly built houses, with accommodations as spacious and modern as in the most expensively built asylums, but accommodating 226 patients at a cost of \$68.550.66 a per capita cost of \$303.00.

It must be remembered that the number of patients stated as 226 is the smallest that would be received into such structures, and that in most institutions they would be considered capable of containing 240.

During 1890 by some small but very judicious changes in the older wings attached to the Administration Building, Dr. Blackford, Sup't., added small rooms for ten beds to those wings, while he much improved the corridors and stairways.

About the same time a committee consisting of Dr. Blackford, Sup't., Lewis Harman, Steward, and Messrs. Trout, Lynn, and Todd, Directors, held meetings to consider possibilities; and finally about the last week in June 1890 determined to build on a plan designed by J. C. Neilson, for 96 patients, and located the building therefor East of the most easterly building on the male side. The work was commenced immediately, and being energetically pushed by Mr. Harman, the Steward, by October the brick work was up, and the carpenters at work on the roof, which was completed by November. Subsequent bad weather prevented plastering, and the work laid over until after the long spring rains, when the plastering was done by the present steward, Mr. C. Miller; and there remains at present only a comparatively small amount of work, the materials being all on hand, to be done. When this is completed and paid for, early in June, it is safe to say now that this four story building completely equipped, having accommodations of fullest size for 96 patients, their attendants and all offices except cooking, will have been built, with the help of the organized labor of the asylum, for a little over \$11,000.00; and fixing on that home labor ordinary values, it will be well within bounds to say that these 96 patients will be provided for at \$125 per capita, which was the limit assigned by the committee to the architect.

We can say then that there have been added to the original number of patients 322 beds, in buildings which have the capacity and conveniences of the most expensive asylums, and which in appearance correspond with the original structures, supposed to have been designed by the eminent architect, Robert Cary Long, and that the 322 new patients will come in at a per capita cost of about \$250.00.

To emphasize this fact, it should be stated here that the last state report of the Commission of Lunacy in New York declares that the seven state asy-

lums cost in round numbers nine millions of dollars for 6000 patients, or \$1500 per capita. In the neighboring state of Maryland, Spring Grove Asylum lodges its patients at \$2000 per capita, and many of the Northern asylums have exceeded \$3000 per capita. Amongst foreign nations, while the French asylums have cost per capita \$1500 and over, in Ireland, a land of cheap labor and small wealth, 22 district asylums, containing about 10,000 patients, and built between 1821 and 1869, have cost \$3500 per capita.

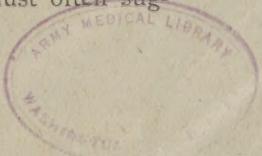
Consider the cabin which for about \$600 could be built for five adult people, and compare it with the accommodations in the new male building. It must be admitted however that taking the New York standard of out lay, perhaps the most economical outside of Virginia, and allowing one third for administration buildings and land, \$5000 would build such a house for five persons as not many of our inmates are accustomed to.

STATISTICAL.

The total capacity of the asylum is 602. There are however 628 names upon its rolls, the apparent discrepancy being explained by the fact that 60 of the patients are well enough to be at home on furlough, but whose entire recovery is not certain enough to justify their final discharge from the jurisdiction of the institution. Their relapse may at any time necessitate their return, and such relapses do in fact cause the number thus absent on furlough to vary continually.

For the last six years the average number on the rolls has been 615, who have been maintained at an average annual cost of \$93,076.78.

It may be well to say here a few words to remove a popular misapprehension as to life in an insane asylum. Many consider it a place from which happiness, contentment, and continued usefulness are of necessity completely banished. But in reality there is among the inmates of this asylum a large amount of personal liberty and freedom from undue restraint, and consequently a good degree of a contented, home like feeling. Here again we refer to the records. The number whose safety, and that of others, requires them to be kept under constant mechanical restraint is only 7, at this time, out of 600. And the total number under restraint at any given time, most of them temporarily, perhaps for only an hour or two, will not exceed an average of 15 in 600. The records also show how much the feeling of contentment and the sense of freedom must be enhanced by the consciousness of a very real usefulness. Out of 310 male patients now in the asylum, 107, or more than one third, are actively at work in the various departments of the institution. Some are trusted to do their work without supervision, a good many have the full liberty of the grounds and of the workshops, and numbers of them work together at labor in the performance of which they are subjected to nothing more than the supervision and direction of a single experienced attendant. On the female side of the house, while there is not so much liberty of the grounds allowed, because it is not so much required for the kind of work to be done by women, yet there are at this time 116 out of 319 who have all the liberty required for, and all the contentment to be derived from, the performance of many kinds of useful work. In short the asylum, so far from being a dreary prison house, is for a large proportion of its inmates a busy workshop, in which attention to their employment not only leaves but little time to brood over their troubles, but must often sug-



gest the cheering reflection that a life spent in such busy usefulness is by no means a blank. And for all alike, for the unemployed at all times, and for the employed during their leisure hours, every sort of amusement and entertainment is provided, such as games, dances, theatricals, and music, especially that of an excellent brass band which has been organized among the attendants and provided with instruments during the present year, and which under the instruction of a professional teacher has made marked progress in skill and proficiency.

On the pay-roll of the asylum there are 1 Superintendent, 4 assistant physicians, 1 secretary and accountant, 1 matron, 29 female and 24 male attendants, 1 supervisor, 1 engineer, 5 steam hands, 1 baker, 3 carpenters, 1 farmer, 3 farm hands, 1 hackman, 1 gardener, 3 garden hands, 1 tailor, 2 seamstresses, 1 painter, 1 shoemaker, 2 night watchmen, 2 housekeepers, 1 dairymaid, 1 barber, 1 messenger, 1 organist, 11 laundresses, 1 soap maker, 6 cooks, 7 waiters 5 members of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors, and 5 chaplains, a total of 129. The chaplains are not resident officers, but ministers in charge of the city churches, who hold services in rotation in the chapel. The pay-roll for the year ending Sep. 30, 1890 amounted for officers to \$10,891.89, and for employes to \$16,201.44 a total of \$26,183.33.

An inventory taken April 1, 1887 by two prominent real estate agents of Staunton, showed the value of the real estate of the asylum at that date to be \$155,275.00, and that of the personal property \$42,575 a total of \$297,850.00, none of which is insured, as no appropriation is made for the purpose.

We will add that one of the most obvious needs of the institution is better accommodation for its resident officers. Although its capacity has been increased to 800 beds, there has been no improvement in or addition to the old administration building which was erected when its capacity was not more than 200. With the exception of one physician for whom a house is provided, no officer is provided with anything more than a single room, although four members of the official staff are married men with families. The necessity that they should reside in or near the asylum becomes more and more urgent as its increasing capacity multiplies the calls for their services at all hours of the day and night. We would therefore call attention of the Legislature to the urgent importance of erecting, at the earliest possible time, suitable buildings as residences for the officers, on the grounds of the Asylum.

In conclusion, we would say that while the buildings and the material appliances of this institution are not so expensive and well appointed as those of some others, yet we claim that it is fully abreast of the best of them in the treatment, both medical and moral, of insanity. The Superintendent, Dr. Blackford, keeps himself fully and intelligently acquainted with the best thought of the times upon this subject, and has brought his knowledge to bear upon it by securing the best results in the institution confided to his care. And we take pleasure in saying that the duties of all the offices of the institution have been fulfilled by their incumbents in a most faithful, efficient, and satisfactory manner.

Respectfully submitted

Sam'l. F. Coleman, Pres't, Board Directors.

S. H. Moffet,

W. H. H. Lynn,

P. H. Trout,

Committee.